

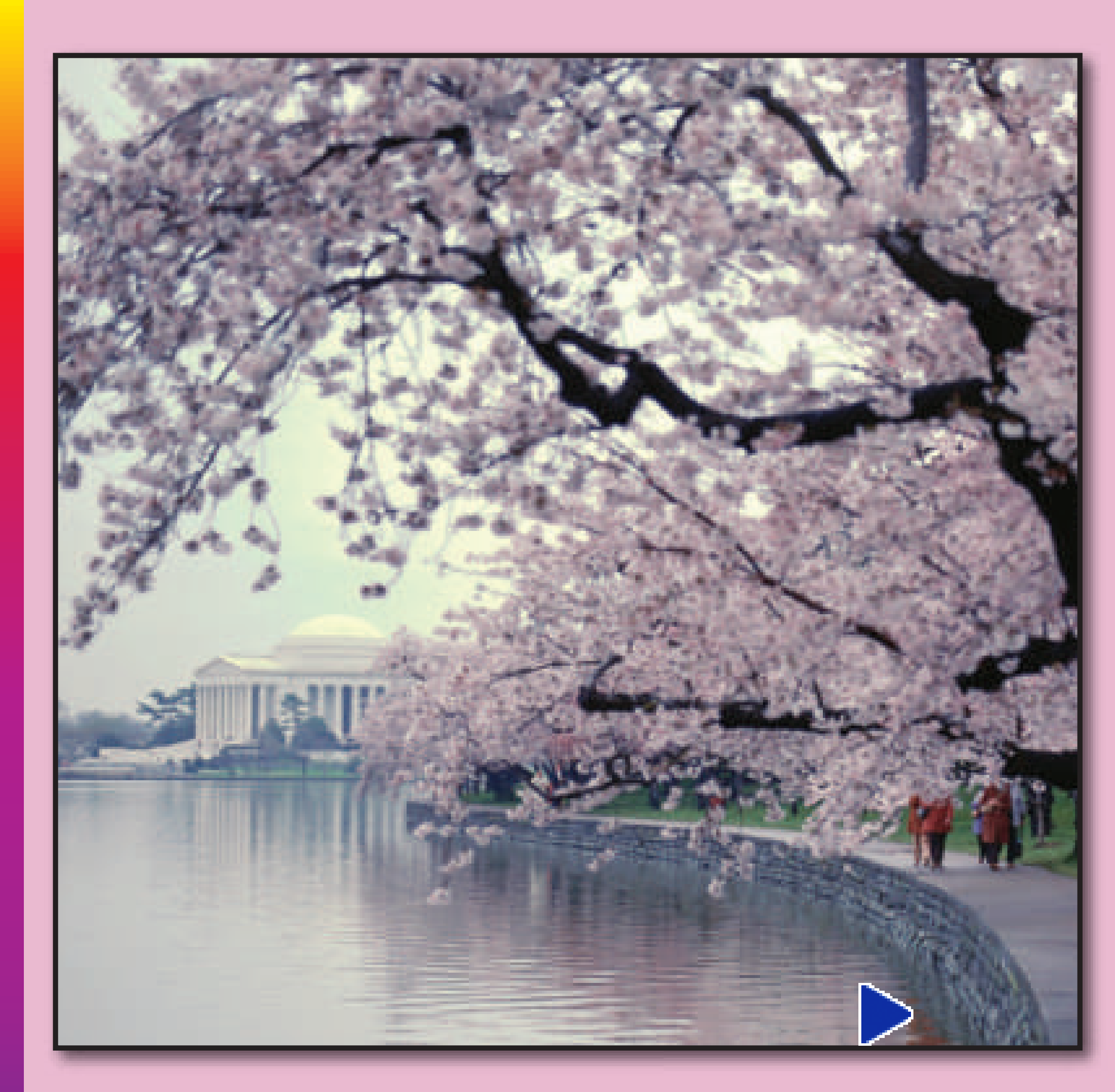
Reader

Social Studies

Social Studies

A Gift from Japan

by Cecelia Li



Genre	Build Background	Access Content	Extend Language
Nonfiction	• Monuments • Symbols of America • International Friendship	• Historical Photographs • Captions • Definitions	• Suffix *-ly*

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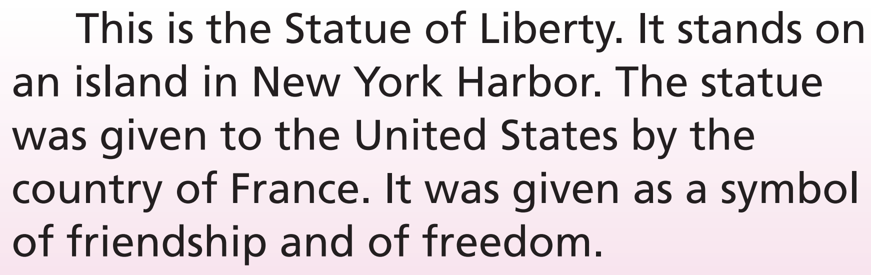


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The Statue of Liberty at New York Harbor, New York



This is the Statue of Liberty. It stands on an island in New York Harbor. The statue was given to the United States by the country of France. It was given as a symbol of friendship and of freedom.

The statue was built in 1886. In those days, people were coming to America from many different countries. They came by ship to New York Harbor. The first thing many people saw was the Statue of Liberty.



The pandas were named Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing.

Other countries have given gifts to America, too. China gave the United States a wonderful gift—two giant pandas. Pandas are animals that remind people of bears. Pandas are very rare. The giant pandas came to the United States as a symbol of friendship. They lived at the National Zoo.



rare: not common



Washington, D.C., is next to the Potomac River.

Here is the story of another gift to the United States, a gift of cherry trees.

In 1885, Eliza Scidmore came back from a trip to Japan. Eliza lived in Washington, D.C. There were many changes taking place in Washington. Buildings, streets, and statues were being built. Trees and flowers were being planted in parks. People also wanted to improve the land that runs along the Potomac River.

D.C.: District of Columbia



Eliza Scidmore had an idea. She had seen beautiful cherry trees in Japan. They were unforgettable. Each year the cherry trees blossomed with pink and white flowers. Eliza wanted to plant cherry trees along the Potomac River. She thought it would make Washington, D.C., a more beautiful place.

Eliza tried for twenty-five years to have the trees planted, but her plan was not accepted.

Finally, Eliza wrote a letter to President William Taft's wife, Helen Taft. She told Mrs. Taft about her idea. Mrs. Taft had lived in Japan. She remembered the beauty of the cherry trees. She promised to help get the cherry trees planted along the Potomac River.

blossomed: opened their flowers

Cherry tree blossom

Cherry trees blooming in Washington, D.C.



People in Japan heard about the plan to plant cherry trees. The city of Tokyo, Japan, wanted to give Washington, D.C., a gift of two thousand cherry trees. The gift would be a symbol of friendship between thetwo countries.

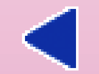
In 1910, two thousand cherry trees arrived from Japan. Inspectors looked over the trees. They had insects on them. These insects could kill trees in America. Sadly, Americans learned that the cherry trees had to be burned to protect many other trees.

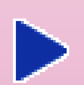


People in Japan looked for healthy cherry trees. In 1912, more than three thousand cherry trees were shipped to America. This time the trees had no insects on them.

The cherry trees were planted along the Potomac River. Some trees were planted in parks. Finally, Eliza’s dream had come true.

Now, each spring the cherry trees bloom with their beautiful pink and white blossoms. Visitors from all over the country travel to Washington to see the trees.





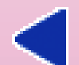




In 1952, cherry trees in Japan began to die. Japan needed help.

People in Washington took cuttings from the trees Japan had given to the United States. Cuttings are branches of trees that can be planted. They will grow into trees. The cuttings were sent to Japan. Japan's trees were saved!

Japan and the United States gave each other gifts. The gifts are symbols of friendship and beauty.





Talk About It

1. How did Japan show its friendship to America?
2. Why did Eliza Scidmore and other people want cherry trees planted in Washington, D.C.?

Write About It

3. Think about the gifts of friendship America has gotten. On a separate sheet of paper, write about a gift that America could give another country.

Extend Language

The suffix *-ly* changes the word *sad* to *sadly,* which means "in a sad way." People sometimes do things sadly. Tell what you think the words *gladly* and *quickly* mean.

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